



THE STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES OF LEARNING ENGLISH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

One of the languages taught from first education to higher education is English. It is taught in our education because of the importance of learning English as an international language. English as an International as well as a foreign language has been included in the education curriculum in Indonesia since Indonesia achieved independence. This government policy has purposes, It is an effort to improve the quality of human resources, and a lot of books are in English. In terms of learning English, teaching influences students' success in English class. The choices of the appropriate teaching strategy can help establish an effective and targeted language learning process. Many teaching strategies are suitable for learning English in higher education. This study aims at describing the obstacles or difficulties of students in learning English, using qualitative research methods with observation and recorded data. Data analysis is carried out in three ways: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. It showed that the research subjects faced difficulties learning English in each language skill. It was because of different levels of English mastery, lack of motivation, and applied learning models.

KEYWORDS: *learning English, students' difficulties, higher education*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

English is one of the languages spoken and written in communities around the world. The use of English bridges all national language differences. English also helps everyone to create exchanges that make it easy to connect in today's global era. Exchanges create opportunities for progress in various areas such as social, technical, and economic education. English education in Indonesia is taught from pre-kindergarten to the university level and is a subject and compulsory subject from middle school to high school. Learning English requires four skills: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. The four skills are divided into receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (writing and speaking). In higher-level colleges, English courses are usually offered in the first semester and the second semester. Know the range of all the skills students must master to become fluent in English. Learning English helps prepare you for the challenges of communication in the professional and social world. Communication is a basic requirement for human life. Because without communication, the interaction between people, both physically and individually, as a group, or as an organization, is impossible.

Communication is how individuals, groups, organizations, and societies create and use the information to connect with their environment and others (Uzoroka, A., & Makeri, Y. A. 2020). Through communication, people can learn something, and events can even develop knowledge. That is, they can learn from the information they receive from their experiences



and the environment. Second, there is the human effort to adapt to the environment. In fact, the survival of society depends on how people adapt to their environment. Third, there are efforts to transform the legacy of socialization. Community members are asked to exchange values, behaviors, and roles in a sustainable society. For example, how do parents teach their children good manners? how do schools work to educate citizens, and how do government policies protect the interests of its members and the communities it serves? In this digital age, graduates are expected to be able to use technology in their daily activities, such as email applications. Of course, reading comprehension ability to understand the displayed sentence, and the writing ability to give an appropriate answer are required. Of course, use correct grammar. During college, English helps students expand their knowledge.

English can be particularly helpful in obtaining reading materials and other sources of information to develop expertise in both the language and other areas of interest. If a student wishes to continue his level of education, proficiency in speaking English is one of his requirements for admission or acceptance. Students seeking international scholarships can prove their English proficiency through tests such as TOEFL, IELTS, and PTE. Apart from that, there are three elements that support the four skills of language acquisition: Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation. All of these are provided by professional language teachers and should ensure that students are able to use the language they are learning, including English, appropriately in the right context. When learning English, a student often encounters barriers and difficulties regarding one or more of her skills or elements to master. This is an experience not only for English courses but also for language learners taking non-English study programs. Adedoyin, O. B., & Soykan, E. (2020) found that the barriers many of his ESL learners face are non-existent.

The problem with reading comprehension is the lack of knowledge of the context of the material being read. Writing skills are challenging because the activities require complex and systematic thought processes, but must be mastered by English learners. According to Kuama, Intharaksa, S., & Usa. (2016), the importance of the written work being published and read by a large number of people also facilitates the acquisition of writing skills. Therefore, the quality of writing must be constantly improved. Regarding speaking ability, Yauqi, K., Munadi, S., & Triyono, M. B. (2020) found in their research that a problem that students often face when speaking English is the lack of English vocabulary. As mentioned at the outset, the main difficulties that participating students face in learning English are that English as a foreign language is neither their native nor official language and that English is being used by people.

In this article, therefore, researchers are interested in further investigating the obstacles faced by students in the four language skills. Education as an ESP learner. This should be studied as teaching material so that it can later be used to improve English learning in Talbiya Faculty/Tribakti East Java education.

2.0 METHOD

Based on the purpose of this study on identifying difficulties in learning English, this type of study is qualitative research that produces observable written or spoken language. In May 2022, I conducted a survey of students for the 2021-2022 semester. My research subject is 160 students of Tarbiyah/ Faculty of Education in Islamic Education Program English II Course in 2nd Semester. Data collection is done by observing and recording data. Observations were made on research topics to collect responses from students about their first-semester experience of learning English, including the obstacles they faced. The study



lasts one semester and observes active and inactive students. During the course of the study, students are taught learning materials developed and prepared in RPS. Students can be characterized as active, demonstrating active participation in the learning process by answering questions, asking questions, and often making comments during group activities. If in the learning process, the learner rarely exhibits interaction with the tutor or her members of the group and is only active when asked to answer questions by the tutor or when assigned, the learner is less active classified as unpopular.

Mid-Term exam (UTS) and Final Exam (FH) collections serve as data collection. This value indicates student learning outcomes after 7 meetings before UTS and a total of 14 meetings before UAS. Triangulation is used to check the accuracy of data surveys. As Ali, M. K., & Maksum, H. (2020) points out, when using triangulation, researchers use a variety of data collection techniques and reference sources to verify whether the data obtained are reliable. Collect data as you use it. In this study, the data analysis used consisted of three phases: data cleanup, data presentation, and conclusion or validation.

In data reduction, researchers summarize the data collection process during the learning activity. This process is done by looking for key points to focus the research data on. In this case, the response to learning difficulties should be categorized according to the student's activity level. In data presentation, researchers will present the results of their research data summarized by describing in detail and clearly what is relevant to students' barriers to learning English. In drawing conclusions, the conclusions first presented are preliminary. This is subject to change if supporting references are lacking to enhance our findings data. With valid and consistent supporting references, the researcher can draw reliable conclusions.

3.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Observations indicate that speaking skill is one of the most difficult skills for students to acquire. The main factors include a lack of English vocabulary, poor pronunciation, fear of making mistakes, feeling embarrassed of being laughed at by friends, and lack of grammar. Speaking skills are taught using phrases that are commonly used in everyday life. Teachers (lecturers) prepare topics that can be used as factual discussions in the classroom, such as daily life. Discussions are conducted in the simple present tense. Students are given the time and opportunity to tell stories and describe their daily activities, including regular activities. Researchers' findings show that students have particular difficulty using third-party (him, her, that) vocabulary with the addition of the vocabulary "s/es/ies". Another hurdle is the use of do/does in questions. Many of the factors that cause student difficulties lie in the student's emotional factors. This is supported by a study by Albashtawi, A. H., & Al Bataineh, K. B. (2020), which found that the number of times English was practiced and psychological factors (in this case emotional factors) were the causal factors for English learning difficulties.

Next is listening. When speaking English with video or audio, the student feels that she cannot keep up with the normal audio pace of her native speaker. Specified video views are related to educational or religious fields using Video Coverage of Applications. The video coverage has some stories about religion in Indonesia. This is intended to make students feel that the content of the video message is closer to the problems occurring in the educational world they know, and to acquire additional knowledge that will motivate them to solve the world's environmental problems.. Secondly, due to a lack of vocabulary and a lack of understanding of English accents, videos are subtitled to show what is being discussed in conversations, even though they contain English phrases spoken by foreign or non-native



speakers.

The next difficult skill is writing, a complex skill to master. In the process of learning to write. Students are given written assignments on a given topic. Pre-canned topics are those included in the department-provided book units. These topics are personal information, vacation, work, food and drink, and nature. Topics were chosen because they are considered the most common and most relevant to everyday students. For example, a natural subject where students can write about the use of pesticides on crops and their impact on the environment is an area of their interest. Another topic that may be considered easier is personal information written by research subjects about student identities and personal matters. This topic is interesting because students have the opportunity to get to know each other personally in class. This allows students to learn how to socialize with their friends outside of class. During this process, students go through different stages of sketching (creating an outline of the writing) and drafting (creating the first draft). Editing (adjusting the accuracy of the text), Revision (adjusting the relevance of the content), and Publishing (posting the resulting text for your friends to read). This writing skill learning process also requires a student's vocabulary knowledge. Researchers' results show that there is an error in the use of the main verb in the given situation and the use of the correct tense for the situation. For example, during the holidays, students are given assignments to write down their travel experiences and vacation activity experiences. Of course, what they write should be the experience they have had or worked with. Correct tenses are simple past and past perfect. However, in professional research, simple present or simple past tense is often used. For example, the sentence "I go to Jakarta last holiday" should actually be "I went to Jakarta last holiday", but the student does not add any adjectives. For example, the sentence "Tiger big and scary" becomes "Tiger is big and scary". Next, you need to be careful about spelling mistakes in vocabulary. For example, the sentence "I got a ticket to Malang as a birthday give from my parents" should be read as "I got a ticket to Malang as a birthday gift from my parents". The process of writing good copy is certainly impossible without a good understanding of vocabulary.

The lowest perceived barrier was reading comprehension. Most students excel in reading compared to other skills. This refers to the ability to answer questions asked after reading a text. In the results of the study results, also look at the reactions of the subjects, the study is still intact in the sentences given in the text. Unlike when using paraphrasing techniques, the student must first understand the content of the text of her message. Then use what you understand to answer the question. In other words, use your own writing. However, for a minority of students, reading comprehension needs to be improved. This is related to her declining vocabulary skills, especially her ESP reading comprehension.

General readings are easier to understand. This means that the message contained in the text is difficult to interpret, and students cannot understand the content of the message. Additionally, this obstacle comes to the teacher's attention to help select texts that meet the needs and level of the learner. ESP materials are added using classroom materials. From the results of this study, it can be concluded that the difficulty of acquiring English for mastering all language skills and mastering the language is influenced by the individual student's degree of immersion in the language. This is because the results of learning studies show that subjects classified as active perform better in speaking, listening, writing, and reading than students classified as less active.

These students agree with the following characteristics or signs of a learning disability:

- a. Often misreads information



- b. Possible syntax or grammar problem.
- c. Slowly learning English
- d. May have problems with sentence structure, writing, and composition
- e. Sometimes it is difficult to recall information in English.
- f. Have no ability to repeat what they have just said
- g. Have a short attention span or impulsive attention problems (e. g: difficulty concentrating on tasks, changing activities, or dealing with interruptions from routine, inability to sustain tasks, etc.)
- h. Pronunciation problems when learning in the classroom.
- i. Students' current grades do not correspond to their intellectual abilities.

4.0 CONCLUSION

When it comes to language learning, students mostly face difficulties and obstacles, especially when learning a foreign language, especially English. These difficulties and obstacles are recognizable across language skills. In this study, the research topics listed the barriers to learning English from most difficult to least: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. The factor is the influence of the level of language ability of each participant. We hope that the results of the research will be beneficial in improving the English learning process at the Tarbiyah/Faculty of Education especially to overcome students' problems in learning English.

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